

As I think about February, I admit that I struggled to look back with optimism and cheer – what a tough month of winter! It seems every time we turned around it was snowing, and not just a little but a lot. (More about that later; I've deemed this report our "celebrate our winter warriors" report.) But putting the snow aside (figuratively, as opposed to literally, which is what many of you have done so often and so well the last month), there were a lot of good things going on:

- I celebrated my LIII-rd birthday (I'm the same age as the Super Bowl, so I count my birthdays in Roman numerals) with the much younger and more handsome/vivacious (respectively) Motor Vehicle Division celebrities **Kelly Sharp** (mail clerk 2) and **Darcy Doty** (Driver & Identification Services Director). Kelly and Darcy both share the same birthday as me and we have been celebrating them together – Kelly and I just celebrated our tenth together and Darcy has joined us for the last three.
- Our oldest son Dan's diploma came in the mail! It was rumored that he graduated in December, but Utah State doesn't have a winter graduation ceremony, and we don't like to assume anything where Danny-boy is concerned. So, we were super excited when the giant envelope showed up in our mailbox and provided documentary proof. Dan later gave us additional good news when he called and said his wrist wasn't broken after all. It would have been more exciting if he had first told us he had fallen snowboarding and was concerned that it was broken in the first place, but once we put it all together (the information, not his wrist) it still seemed like good news.
- **John Selmer** (Strategic Performance Division Director), **Mikel Derby** (Federal Liaison), and Transportation Commission Chair **Kathy Fehrman** and Vice-Chair **Tom Rielly** and I had a great trip to the AASHTO (American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials) meeting in Washington D.C., where we heard presentations from Sen Tom Carper (Delaware, Ranking Member, Senate Environment & Public Works Committee), Rep. Sam Graves (Missouri, Ranking Member, House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee), Rep. Peter DeFazio (Oregon, Chairman, House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee), and U.S. DOT Secretary Elaine Chao on infrastructure funding. (If you're interested in hearing their thoughts on the national infrastructure conversation, you can see videos of their presentations at the following links: [Carper](#), [Graves](#), [DeFazio](#), [Chao](#).) We also visited members of our Iowa Congressional delegation (Senator Grassley, Senator Ernst, Rep. Loebsack, Rep. Axne, and Rep. Finkenauer) to discuss the same. We focused on assuring continued federal investment in Iowa transportation infrastructure, including reauthorization of the Federal FAST Act (which provides over \$500M in



With Senator Grassley, Mikel Derby, Commission Chair Kathy Fehrman, Commission Vice-Chair Tom Rielly, and John Selmer at Senator Grassley's office.

road and bridge funding to the state each year but expires September 30, 2020); eliminating a rescission of \$7.6B in contract authority under the FAST Act that will happen July 1, 2020; finding a fix for the federal Highway Trust Fund, which will become insolvent in federal fiscal year 2021, and increasing federal investment in the nation's interstate system and lock and dam system. More than we can solve in two short days of visits, but we were pleased to contribute to the conversations, explain the urgency for federal action, and set the stage for a full Transportation Commission visit to our Congressional delegation later this year.

But most importantly, I had the privilege of being associated with an incredibly effective and dedicated group of people that made our mission of getting you there a hard-fought reality every day, which makes it a great month. So, without further delay, let's get to the rest of our February report!

Commissioner Kraig Paulsen appointed to head Department of Revenue



Kraig Paulsen, new Director of the Iowa Department of Revenue

It's with mixed emotion that we report Governor Reynolds has appointed Commissioner **Kraig Paulsen** as head of the Iowa Department of Revenue, effective February 25, 2019 – mixed because we're happy for his appointment and sure he will do great things for the state at the Department of Revenue, but disappointed that he will not be able to continue as a member of our Transportation Commission. As everyone who has worked with Kraig in or out of the Commission can attest, Kraig has a sharp, inquisitive, and analytical mind that helped push our work and the work of the Transportation Commission, and we will miss his contributions.

Kraig, who received his bachelor's degree from Iowa State University, his Master of Business Administration from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, and a law degree from the University of Iowa, also resigned from his role as director of both the Supply Chain Initiatives and Business Analytics Initiatives at Iowa State University's Ivy College of Business. Kraig said this about his new role: "It's an honor to join Governor Reynolds' administration. In my new role, I look forward to working with the high-quality professionals within the Department to ensure the highest levels of accountability and transparency to Iowa taxpayers."

Governor Reynolds has appointed **Linda Juckette** of Cumming, Iowa, to fill the remainder of Kraig's term on the Commission, and she will join us starting with the March workshop and business meeting. We're excited to have Linda join the Commission and will include her bio in the next report. In the meantime, please join us in congratulating Kraig on his appointment and new role.

Think this winter has been severe? The data says you're right.

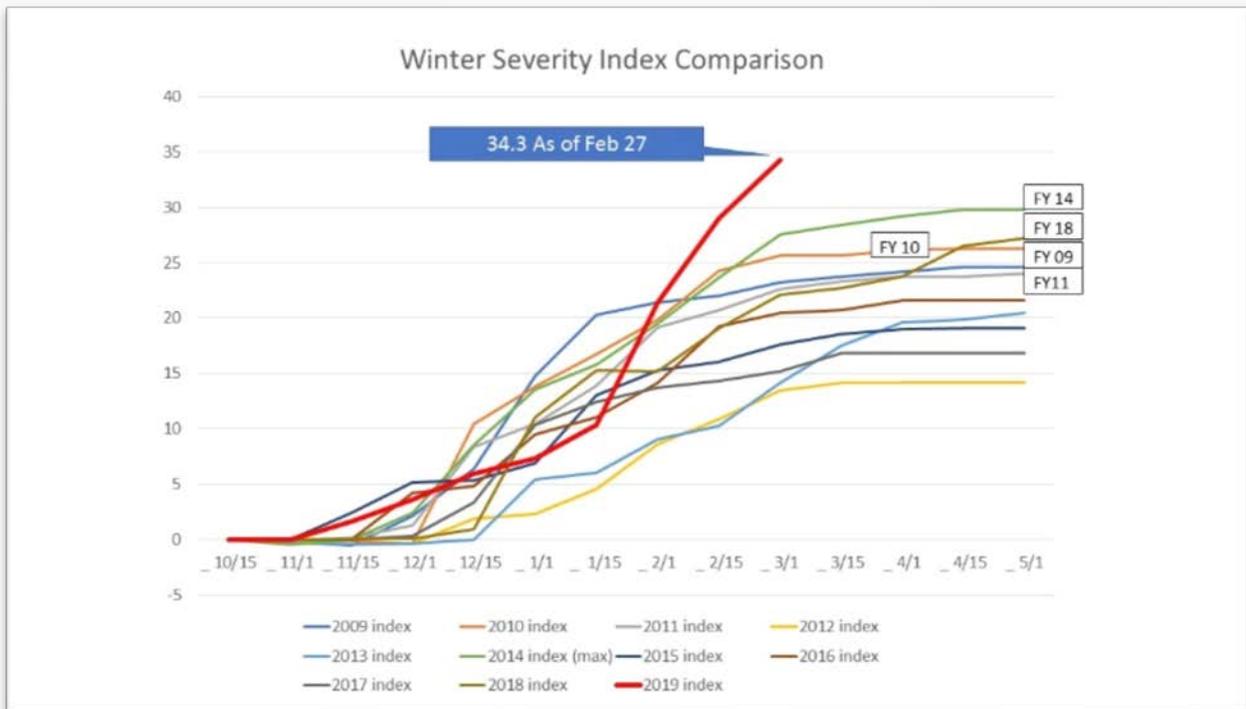
Every winter is different. Some are relatively warm, some are bitterly cold. Some have lots of ice while some stick mainly to snow. All these factors are important when considering how difficult or costly it is to plow our roads from one winter to the next. A weather severity index is a way to score the relative "severity" of a given winter using a numerical scale so we can make better sense of our budget

expenditures and our use of time and deicers. When the winter index is higher, we expect to use more labor, equipment/fuel, and salt than in a winter with a lower index. These indices are incredibly handy tools to see logical operational patterns through the chaos that is Iowa weather.

Our winter index creates a severity score for each garage location based on storm duration, storm frequency, snowfall amount, and temperature. The index distinguishes between storm types too, so that snow, mixed precipitation, freezing rain/sleet, and blowing snow all have a slightly different impact on the score. Generally, the colder the pavement temperatures during a storm, the higher the index score.

Our Office of Maintenance computes these index scores regularly and posts them to our public performance websites (<https://iowadot.gov/performance/winter-operations>). We've also been using them extensively for our budget projections and making the case for salt budget appropriations.

As you may have guessed, we are on a rather remarkable trend with our weather severity right now. As of mid-January, our winter was rather modest, and didn't amount to much compared to other winters as of that time. But as the graph below shows, all that changed as round after round of cold, strong, statewide storms piled up in quick succession.



As you can see, we have already eclipsed the maximum from the last decade (2014) and the winter still isn't over! Which brings us to our next topic

Thank you to our winter warriors!



*Mitch Dillavou,
Highway Division
Director*

Our most visible service at this time of year is winter operations. This winter has been the worst in the last ten years according to the metrics that I have seen, and winter is not done yet. [Mark's note – see above!] Our winter operations are very much in the public eye. The comments that have been received are very positive, and as I see it, very well deserved.

Given that, I am honored to recognize your exemplary serviced to the department and to your fellow citizens with the following comments.

Not sure what a normal winter is but I can definitely say last year and this year's winters are anything but that. Last year (2017-2018) started off with very few winter events and then came March. We had snow every weekend right up until the last weekend in April. I don't remember having much of a spring and fall ended way too early.

This winter season started off with snow at the end of November but then once again we were lulled into thinking maybe we will have a normal winter (whatever that means). As you all know, it has been anything but normal since the second week of January, in fact we have broken old snow records for the amount of snow over a 40-day period. And then we had last week's storm [the weekend of February 23 and 24] that brought freezing rain, rain, snow and high winds that produced a storm not seen by many of us for many years or even a life time.

With all that has happened over the last two years and especially last week's storm, I want to commend the snow plow operators and Motor Vehicle Enforcement Officers and all our support staff for your dedication and outstanding effort in clearing our roadways and enhancing public safety. I also want you to know that the great work you do on a daily basis does not go unnoticed and is greatly appreciated by many. The following are only a few examples of the compliments we have received over the last few months.

I commend the men and women of the Highway Division, and of the other DOT Divisions, whose employees make up the team that delivers, year after year, the best possible winter mobility to the driving public that conditions allow. Your professional, dedicated work is the essential element in delivering this service.

Thank you to everyone that makes operations look easy:

- Maintenance equipment operators who use the 900 snow plow trucks, and the snow-blowers, and the front-end loaders, and the brine makers and all the other pieces of equipment that are needed in a snow fight.
- Mechanics and others who fix the damaged equipment, so those pieces can be returned to the fight.

- Department non-maintenance staff who do things from operating equipment to answering phones, and everything in between.
- District based supervisory staff who coordinate and oversee logistics and operations, and who also operate equipment when their time allows.
- Motor Vehicle Enforcement Officers who help with the many traffic control issues that come up. This group also deals with rescuing stranded motorists as does our sister partner, the Department of Public Safety – Iowa State Patrol.
- District and central office staff who have work the very difficult matter of salt use and delivery logistics, and who do reporting to management.
- The Traffic Management Center which performs the essential service of keeping people informed of a myriad of things, including: the Dynamic Message Signs (DMS) system; 511 system correctness; and the department's coordination with law enforcement entities.
- IT Division staff who have kept needed winter operations systems up and going.
- Administration Services Division staff who provide needed support during winter operations.
- All the other people who contribute but I failed to mention here.

Thank you for helping to provide excellent winter-season public mobility.

And now a word from our customers!

I say it all the time and it's absolutely true – everywhere I go during the winter, I get compliments for our work keeping the roads safe and clear. There are so many we can't possibly capture them all, but we thought it would be good for everyone to see some of the written comments we have received just in the past few weeks. Consider the following just a small sample of how much people appreciate your work to help them get there safely, efficiently and conveniently, and how important your work is:

Lisa: I just wanted to reach out and say thank you to a plow truck driver. On Thursday, Feb 7th my 16-year-old daughter was driving on Highway 100, near Edgewood Road in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. She called me frantically around 9:30 AM and said that she had done a 360 and hit the concrete barrier dividing the road. I talked to her and calmed her down and hung up to call her dad. I called her back after speaking to her dad, and a plow driver had stopped to make sure she was ok. He told her he thought she was OK to drive to the Hy-Vee on Edgewood until me and her Dad could get to her. He then told her to follow him which she did. He went on plowing so none of us got a chance to thank him. My daughter never was able to thank him either. If you know whom the gentleman was, please, please tell him our deepest thank you. If she would have stayed where she was, who knows if someone else could have slid and hit her. He was looking out for her and that was something he didn't have to do. It meant the world to us, so again, if you know who it was, please tell him thank you.

Joe: Awesome job keeping the roads clear. Never seen such plow operation so organized in keeping them clean after a storm.

Ric: I wanted to applaud the outstanding job of snow removal on I-35 near Ankeny. I witnessed the line-up of snow plows on I-35 which removed the snow from the middle barrier to the outside lanes. Because of that I-35 is still all clear! Thank you. Great job.

Stephanie: THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU!!! FOR ALL THE HARD-WORKING PLOW TRUCKS TODAY!!!!!! stay safe!!!

Anonymous: I just would like to say Thank you. You guys have done amazing job cleaning very well the roads these days. I came from Ames every day(I 80 / I 35) to work in Urbandale. It is almost like driving in the summer. I'm from Brazil and I feel safe, this is very important to me. keep doing this fantastic job.

Val: I just wanted to notify the snowplow drivers that work so hard to keep interstate 80 clear from LeClaire to the flying J thank you. I travel this road almost every day to get to work and it almost always is clear and allows for me to get where I need to go safely and not feeling so anxious. I just think that you should know that your work is appreciated greatly.

Ed and Brenda: THANK YOU, THANK YOU SO MUCH! Recently one of your snowplow guys accidentally destroyed our mailbox. When my wife called your office in De Soto, Pete was very friendly and helpful. Pete's crew came out and temporarily fixed our mailbox and then came back and put up a new post and box. It's very nice and we are GRATEFUL! This is great public relations and great work. Thank you so much for doing this and thanks for EVERYTHING that you all do to keep us safely moving on our roads!

Sandy: I would just like to say Thank you to the plow truck drivers on all of their hard work this winter season!! They are doing an excellent job on getting the roads cleared and safe and as someone who works 5 days a week and is on the highways at 6:30a.m every morning and 5:00 pm every night it is greatly appreciated not having a white knuckle drive!

Tom: I really just wanted to send a note to say "thank you"! I commute 80 miles a day on the Interstate and you guys/gals have done a fantastic job of maintaining the roads in spite of an active winter weather season! Thank you very much for all that you do!

Cybil: I'm a nurse and get up at 5am and leave for work shortly after that. I just want to say the Interstates are AMAZINGLY clear even this early in the morning. I travel from Ankeny to Waukee. Thank you so much to all the amazing crew who make it possible for us caregivers to make it to work safely. You are so much appreciated!!

Laura: I drove from Altoona to downtown Des Moines today and the interstates were in excellent shape. Thank you for all your time in keeping the roads clear so the drivers can be safe.

Shane: Just traveled Hwy 13 from Manchester to Edgewood what a testimonial to how well the "remaking corn rows snow fencing" has worked to reduce drifting. Also, my wife commutes to cedar rapids and thank you for making that possible.

Linda: Please pass on a "Thank You" to the road crews that work so hard to keep our roads in good condition when bad weather conditions arrive. They're appreciated so much for all they do.

Deb: Just wanted to say a big thank you to all those involved in keeping the Interstates and highways cleared and safe. Y'all rock!!! People like to complain but never want to compliment. I appreciate & thank all of you!!! Hope this gets seen by the plowdrivers as well!!!!

Patrick: This message is for all the plow drivers. Thank you so much for doing such a fantastic job ladies and gentlemen. Without you doing what you do, we couldn't go about our daily lives. My family and I are very grateful. Hold your heads high and keep doing what you're doing. God bless and be safe.

Mark (Lowe): I couldn't end it any better than that! Thank you!

Tandem plow teams get the job done

As a final nod to the impact and effectiveness of our winter operations, I'm sharing a cool YouTube video (<https://youtu.be/uzR5bNkkVtc>) our **Strategic Communications & Policy** office put together to demonstrate the benefits of tandem plowing, which is an effective technique in which multiple plows plow the same road in staggered formation to clear multiple lanes in a single pass. I think this is cool not just because it demonstrates the power of teamwork and innovation, but the power of communicating and sharing ideas – this video was made because **traffic systems management engineer Sinclair Stolle**, who's in our **Traffic Operations** office, shared video of tandem plowing on Yammer, and **Grimes Resident Construction Engineer Ben Hucker** saw it and thought it would be a good idea to use it to help the public understand tandem plowing – in his words, "The . . . video was completed at my request after seeing Sinclair's post on of the tandem plowing footage on Yammer. I was looking for a product I could share with friends and family to educate them on safety tips around tandem plowing operations. After participating in tandem plowing on I-235 a couple weeks ago, it was apparent that some drivers were not familiar with safety practices around tandem plowing operations."

The tandem plowing footage was taken from I-235 traffic cameras on the evening of January 22, 2019 and features Des Moines North crews. Ben's right – it's terrific, instructive video that shows how this innovative technique works and how to stay safe around it. I encourage you to give it a look and to share with your friends, family, and on social media. Great work by everyone involved!

Electric vehicle charging infrastructure



*Stu Anderson, Planning,
Programming & Modal
Division Director*

Last month we provided an overview of the agency's report on the impact of electric vehicle impacts on the Road Use Tax Fund (RUTF). This month, we'd like to update you on efforts to support electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

Before we jump into that, here's a quick update on legislation being considered to implement our recommendations outlined in the electric vehicle report. As of March 5, the Senate version of the bill (SF 473) has passed the Senate Transportation Committee. The House Transportation Committee also passed a version of the bill (HSB 197). The House bill is slightly different from the Senate bill and our report recommendations in that it includes a three-year phase-in of the supplemental vehicle registration fee.

Now, to the topic of electric vehicle charging infrastructure. One of the challenges to widespread adoption of electric vehicles is the availability of charging infrastructure. Recognizing that challenge, the legislature last session also directed the development of a report that looks at infrastructure support needed for electric vehicles, evaluates costs and benefits, and makes recommendations. The Iowa Economic Development (IEDA) was tasked with developing the report in cooperation with the Iowa Department of Transportation and the utility industry. The final report was just released by IEDA and it is titled ***“Charging Forward: Iowa’s Opportunities for Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Support.”*** Here is a [link](#) to the report on IEDA’s website, which is an excellent source of information on electric vehicle charging infrastructure issues and challenges. Among 10 key recommendations are recommendations to support fast charging station feasibility and profitability; plan and develop electric charging corridors; enhance consumer access and usage at charging stations; and electrify transportation choices across Iowa. The Iowa DOT plays a direct role in those specific recommendations.

Volkswagen Settlement

In 2016, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) filed a complaint that Volkswagen (VW) violated the Clean Air Act by selling vehicles equipped with devices that allowed diesel vehicles to pass emission tests but then emitted levels of nitrogen oxides in excess of EPA levels during normal operation. Through several settlements, VW agreed to provide funding to support activities that reduce nitrogen oxides across the country. One of the activities is the allocation of funds to states for their allocation to eligible activities. The state of Iowa will receive approximately \$21 million to allocate to eligible projects over several years. The Iowa DOT was asked to coordinate the allocation of VW funds working with other state agencies through first the development of a [beneficiary mitigation plan](#) and then the direct allocation of funds to eligible projects. Among the categories of eligible projects is “Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) Supply Equipment.” The settlement allows up to 15 percent of the funds be allocated to projects in this category and Iowa’s beneficiary mitigation plan targets the full 15 percent (\$3.15 million) for this category to support electric vehicle charging infrastructure. While the first round of funding is about to be announced, the ZEV Supply Equipment category was not included in this round as we wanted to wait for the completion of IEDA’s report to assure the efforts are consistent. Now that the IEDA report has been released, we will initiate an application process for charging infrastructure later this year.

Another component of the VW settlement is their commitment to spend \$2 billion in [ZEV investments](#) across the country over a 10-year period. These efforts will support ZEV infrastructure, access to ZEVs, and ZEV education. VW is calling this effort [Electrify America](#). IEDA has submitted [proposals](#) to Electrify America encouraging their focus on installing charging infrastructure along Iowa’s Interstate system. Electrify America has three charging stations operational in Iowa along I-80 with one in Council Bluffs at a Walmart on Manawa Centre Drive, one at a Kum & Go off of the Grand Prairie Parkway in Waukee, and one at the Casey’s off the Williamsburg exit. We expect more will be installed in the future.

Alternative Fuel Corridor

To facilitate awareness and coordination of electric vehicle charging infrastructure, the Federal Highway Administration has developed an [Alternative Fuel Corridor](#) program. This is a corridor designation and signage program to provide uniform signage to alternative fuel facilities (including electric vehicle

charging infrastructure). Currently, I-35 and I-80 across Iowa have this designation but we are holding off on signage installation until more facilities come on line. Consistent with the recommendations from IEDA's report, additional effort to plan and develop electric charging corridors will occur within Iowa and across state borders throughout the Midwest.

Electrify Transportation Choices

Finally, we are supporting the expansion of electric vehicle transportation choices. We expect this will occur through awards from the VW settlement, but it has already occurred through the award of EPA Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA) funding to support the purchase of electric buses at the Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority. The [DERA Program](#) is a relatively small amount of funding available for diesel emissions reduction projects much like the VW settlement funding.

In closing, there is a lot going on in Iowa related to electric vehicles and charging infrastructure. We'll continue to keep you updated in these monthly reports on the status of the electric vehicle user fee legislation and efforts to support the coordinated installation of charging infrastructure across Iowa.

IowaWORKS celebrates opening an office at our Ames complex



*Lee Wilkinson,
Administrative
Services Director*

On Wednesday, Feb. 27th, we held a ribbon cutting to celebrate the co-location of an IowaWORKS expansion office located inside our Conference Center in Ames. (The Conference center is across the street from our main complex on the north side of Lincoln Way.) The focus of the office is to help job seekers receive assistance and get connected to jobs as well as connect them to skills and education needed to meet the demands of a changing workforce.

We worked to create a unique partnership between us and Workforce Development to provide space within our facility for them to bring an office back to Ames, where they have not had an office for many years. Prior to the opening of this location, customers in the Ames

area needed to travel to Marshalltown or Des Moines to receive services.

I had the honor of representing us during the ceremony along with Beth Townsend, Iowa Workforce Development Director and Brenda Dryer, Workforce Solutions Director for the Ames Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Commission. It was a great opportunity to demonstrate that we and our fellow agencies work as One Team for the citizens of Iowa. Thank you to everyone who helped make this happen!



Iowa Workforce Development Director Beth Townsend uses Lee Wilkinson's desk scissors to cut the ribbon. Not pictured: Lee's giant stapler.

Song of the month

Fully recognizing the iffy-ness of this pick, both on the basis of taste and a general sensitivity to tiredness of winter, this month I'm going with "Ice, Ice Baby," the 1990 hip hop hit (that's alliterative) by Vanilla Ice. I know he's been exposed as a lip-syncer and the song is totally a rip-off of the classic David Bowie/Queen team-up "Under Pressure" (from Queen's 1982 "Hot Spaces" album, which still resides in my well-worn album collection), but you haven't lived until you ride around with Erin Lowe and listen to her nail every word of it. One of my favorite things to do around Erin is start singing "dum, dum, dum, da da dum, dum" while slow snapping my fingers – when I'm very lucky she answers back with "All right stop! Collaborate and listen!" and then knocks out the whole song.

Wellness tip

My wellness word of the month is *flexible* – not flexible as in "do yoga" (although that's not a bad thing to do), but flexible as in "be flexible when it's hard to do want you want to do." I'm hopeful better days are coming, but all the super-cold and icy days (as well the very busy day that sometimes catch us all) can get in the way of your fitness and wellness routines and make it hard to do or get to the things you want to do. It can be easy on those days to give up or get frustrated, but it's better to be flexible – rather than focusing on what you can't do, find something you can do (which can be yoga or a walk through the halls) – even if it's only for 15 minutes. Every little bit helps, and you'll be shocked at how much better your mood, mind, and body feel with even a moderate amount of movement and exercise.

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Well, my friends, we have once again reached the end of another report. Thank you again for all that you do to keep the state safe and moving in these cold months. Stay safe and well; next time we talk it will be spring!

Best,

Mark